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Immediate Release

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**Environment Secretary Approves PNM Air Quality Permit with Strong
Restrictions to Protect Human Health and the Environment**

(Santa Fe, NM) –New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Secretary Ron Curry today approved an air quality operating permit for PNM's Las Vegas Generating Station. This permit includes conditions and restrictions necessary to protect the environment and the health of residents who live near the diesel power plant.

The conditions required by the permit include strong restrictions on hours of operation, that emissions be closely monitored by NMED and that the plant will not be used unless PNM has given 24 hours prior notice to a representative of Las Vegas Citizens for Affordable Responsible Energies (CARES) and NMED's Air Quality Bureau. These restrictions were incorporated into the permit based on the input of members of the public.

"I am issuing this permit because I am constrained by the law to do so. However, I have included most of the conditions proposed by the citizens," said Secretary Curry. "It is time for PNM to make a decision both from an environmental and a business standpoint that this plant is just not worth it. It's time for PNM to shut this plant down," "Until that time, NMED intends to use this permit to strongly regulate this plant and protect the health and environment of the people of Las Vegas."

The Las Vegas Generating Station was built 30 years ago and had been grandfathered into the air quality regulations. NMED's Title V permit will allow the Department to monitor the plant and ensure that it meets state and federal air quality standards. Approximately 100 citizens attended the public hearing concerning this permit in November, including representatives of Las Vegas CARES and the Southwest Organizing Project.

The permit must now be submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for approval. EPA has 45 days to rule in this matter.

For further information, please contact Jon Goldstein, NMED Communication Director at (505) 827-0314.

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